

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS**

**November 22, 2016**

**WHITE HOUSE LIBRARY CARD CHALLENGE**

Reading and access to informational resources are great equalizers for expanding educational and career opportunities. However, the 2010 United States Census data indicates that only 62% of households have a computer and only 55% have Internet access. This means millions of youth, mostly from low socio-economic households, must rely on public schools and libraries for free access to computers and the Internet. However, studies show that more than 60% of children living below the poverty level do not have a library card.

The White House Library Card Challenge (Challenge) was announced by President Obama in Spring 2015 with the objective of ensuring that every Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12) student across the nation has a library card which can be used to access free learning resources. The Challenge calls upon library directors to work with their mayors or county executives, school leaders, and school librarians to accomplish this objective.

In 2015, the Urban Library Council launched Round 1 of the Challenge with 60 library jurisdictions. The Los Angeles County (County) Public Library (Public Library) proposes to participate in Round 2 of the Challenge in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in order to reach out to all 62 school districts which

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operate across the County. The Public Library and LACOE's objective will be to increase the number of K-12 students who can receive the educational support necessary to develop language, reading, and critical thinking skills and increase access to digital resources, free online homework help through the Public Library's tutor.com program, as well as other online databases. The Public Library will also seek to partner with other County agencies such as the Departments of Children and Family Services, Community and Senior Services, Public Social Services and Parks and Recreation in order to reach as many youth as possible.

Participating in the Challenge is also consistent with the Public Library's effort to support a local community solution related to the national "Campaign for Grade Level Reading" (Campaign). The Campaign is focused on three areas to drive improvements in grade-level reading: school readiness (too many students start school without the skills which will enable them to learn); attendance (too many students are absent more than ten percent of the days in a school year); and summer learning (too many students lose ground during the summer months). The Public Library should commit to this Challenge in support of these objectives, and in furtherance of its overall mission to support learning, close achievement gaps, and build a foundation for sustained collaboration to improve educational data collection and outcomes for all students in the County.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Find that the proposed actions are not a project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is an activity that is excluded from the definition of a project by Section 15378 (b) of the State CEQA Guidelines and does not involve a commitment to a specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment;
2. Accept and authorize the Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to sign the White House Library Challenge Commitment Statement; and

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3. Authorize and delegate authority to the Director of the Los Angeles County Public Library Department to execute documents and agreements related to participating in the White House Library Challenge Commitment.

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